

Additional Notes regarding Tracaulon perfoliata (L.) Greene

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The earliest published paper dealing with Tracaulon perfoliata in Eastern North America is that by Moul (1948). The plant is said to have been introduced at the Joseph B. Gable Rhododendron Nursery at Stewartstown, York Co., Pennsylvania, sometime after 1919. This weed became a troublesome plant there for several years, and attempts to destroy it with 2-4 D failed at that time. Evidently the plant had come in with seeds from Eastern Asia. (Tracaulon perfoliata is native to China, India, Manchuria, Korea, Taiwan, Japan and the Philippine Islands).

Moul also states that Dr. Joseph Ewan had reported this weed at the Glenn Dale Plant Introduction Garden, in Prince Georges County, Maryland, introduced with seeds from Nanking, China, in 1937. Since both Morrison and Gable were experimenting and hybridizing Rhododendrons at this time, it is possible seeds of Tracaulon perfoliata could have gotten to Gable from the Glenn Dale infestation. Eventually, Ewan reported, the Glenn Dale infestation was eradicated.

Hickman and Hickman (1978) reported colonies of this weed at Swathmore College, and at several other Pennsylvania localities. Some of these might have been due to spreading along with Rhododendrons purchased from the Gable Nursery. The Gable hybrids are famous and quite wide-spread.

In early May of this year, the author visited the Gable Nursery and found T. perfoliata growing along roadsides, edge of fields and stream-banks. Then, following several roads out of Stewartstown down into northern Maryland (Harford and Baltimore Counties), he found large growths of this weed along roadside slopes from the highway solid up to the edge of cultivated fields. The headwaters of the Deer Creek is not far south of Stewartstown and the flood-plain there was solid with seedlings, several hundred acres. Several hundred plants collected.

In Baltimore County, along York Road from Maryland Line to Cockeysville, many roadside embankments are solid with this weed; perhaps more widely spread here and in similar situations by roadside mowers. North of and to the west of Reisterstown to the Liberty Dam Area, this weed and Japanese honeysuckle form competitive stands along Hanover Pike and Westminster Pike in Carroll County. About 35 localities studied.

At present there are several thousand acres of this weed in northern Maryland, and it is spreading fast toward the Patapsco and Potomac River drainages. At present, nothing is being done to control it.

Moul, Edwin T. A dangerous weedy Polygonum in Pennsylvania. Rhodora, 50: 64-66. 1948.

Hickman, J.C. and C.S. Hickman Polygonum perfoliatum: A recent Asiatic adventive. Bartonia, No. 45: 18-23, 2 figs. 1978.